DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 412 832 HE 030 623

AUTHOR	Callan, Patrick M.
TITLE	Perspectives on the Current Status of and Emerging Policy Issues for State Coordinating Boards. AGB Occasional Paper No. 2.
INSTITUTION	Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1991-00-00
NOTE	40p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, One Dupont Circle, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036; phone: 800-356-6317 ($4.95 members, 10 or more $3.95 each; $9.95 non-members, 10 or more $7.95 each).
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Advisory Committees; Educational Improvement; Enrollment; Federal Aid; *Governance; *Governing Boards; Higher Education; Institutional Administration; Master Plans; Minority Groups; Policy Formation; *Politics of Education; Public Education; *Public Policy; State Aid; State Boards of Education; State Colleges; *Statewide Planning; Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

This report examines the historical role of statewide coordinating boards, most of which were established after World War II to help states deal with conflicting institutional political interests and values. While authority over institutional management remains vested in governing boards, statewide coordinating boards serve as alternative models of governance, whose lay members are responsible for articulating the broad public interest in higher education. Board functions and roles have varied over time, but may include such issues as master planning, budget review, program review and allocation, and policy analysis. An initial mission was to promote orderly growth during the rapid expansion in enrollment in the postwar era. In the 1980s, as state governors led educational reform, boards became involved in public policy and later worked to improve educational quality and access. During the 1990s the emphasis shifted toward fiscal matters and boards launched initiatives to counter the public belief that higher education was not responding to societal issues such as teacher preparation, strengthening undergraduate education, and increasing enrollment and graduation rates of minorities. Appended are tables outlining the range of coordinating board responsibilities by state, and patterns of campus governance. (CH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 412 832

Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges

Perspectives on the Current Status of and Emerging Policy Issues for State Coordinating Boards

By Patrick M. Callan

AGB OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 2

HE 030 623

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

AGB

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges publishes the Occasional Paper Series as a service to its members. Each paper focuses on current and emerging issues and trends of concern to boards and administrators in the context of their institutional settings and addresses the responsibilities of the institution's leaders and policy makers. AGB distributes new titles in the Occasional Paper Series as they are published to chief executives and board chairs of member institutions.

Permission is granted to AGB members only to photocopy all or part of each paper provided proper credit appears on each copy. Individually bound copies are available at a nominal charge by calling 1-800/356-6317 or 202/296-8400 or by writing to AGB. Multiple-copy discounts are available.

Copyright 1991 Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, One Dupont Circle, Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20036. All rights reserved.

Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities
One Dupont Circle • Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel: 202/296-8400 Fax: 202/223-7053

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Statewide coordinating boards and agencies are relatively young institutions. Most were established during the era of rapid enrollment expansion after World War II. Their primary mission was to promote the orderly growth of higher education and to insulate the decisions regarding growth from parochial educational and political interests. Unlike the consolidated state governing boards, coordinating boards exercise limited authority over campuses and multicampus systems. Their jurisdiction is confined to those areas of governance believed to be necessary for interinstitutional coordination. The states which opted for coordinating boards left institutional boards of trustees with the responsibilities of management and control.

The boards were established to help states deal with conflicting institutional and political interests and values. Whatever their formal functions and authority, the coordinating boards are responsible for articulating the broad public interest in higher education, which may not always be in harmony with institutional or political interests. Effective coordinating boards recognize the need for strong and vital colleges and universities, but they do not make the assumption that institutional and statewide interests are necessarily compatible in all instances.

In establishing the coordinating boards, the legislatures maintained the American tradition of lay stewardship of higher education. Instead of subsuming coordinating agencies under the

executive or legislative arm of state government, the agencies were placed under the direction of independent boards. Over the years the public membership of these boards has been increased and strengthened and institutional representation has been decreased. The powers of many coordinating boards have also been increased; none of the boards have had their authority significantly reduced.

The era of expansion brought statewide "master planning" by coordinating boards into vogue. These plans sought to accommodate enrollment expansion efficiently and to preserve and enhance institutional diversity. In addition to planning, the functions of coordinating boards have typically included budget review, program review, and policy analysis. The authority of the boards to make decisions which are binding on institutions and on the states varies enormously. The formal authority of boards has not, however, been the most important variable in determining their influence. The willingness and capacity of the board to take on a leadership role, to tackle difficult issues carefully and fairly has been the critical factor in board influence and effectiveness.

The states became the principle source of public policy leadership in education in the 1980s. Activist governors led state educational reform efforts directed initially at the public schools. Later, issues of the quality of undergraduate education and minority participation in higher education moved into prominence on many state policy agendas.

In the early eighties, many coordinating boards worked to reduce the impact of tax cutting, the national recession and federal cutbacks on higher education. As the financial health of many states rebounded in the middle years of the decade, resources were often sufficient to permit enhancement of campus budgets and to support statewide initiatives sponsored by coordinating boards to improve quality and access.

The arrival of the 1990s coincided with national and state fiscal difficulties. At the same time, signs of growing disillusionment of state political leaders with higher education began to surface. The major complaints seemed to center on the belief that higher education was not responding to important societal priorities, including improvment of teacher preparation, strengthening of undergraduate education and raising enrollment and graduation rates of minorities. Several national reports issued in 1990 seemed to confirm impressions of non-responsiveness. Some coordinating boards had already launched initiatives in the areas of greatest concern, but it is too early to gauge the impact of these programs.

If they are effective and credible, the coordinating boards will find themselves positioned to exert major influence on state policy in the 1990s. It is often the agenda-setting function that separates leaders from bureaucrats. In order to play a leadership role in the nineties, the coordinating boards must maintain a broad public interest perspective, employ their executive officers through procedures which protect their values

and credibility, and take steps to assure that they can compete for high quality staff.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that the first coordinating board in American higher education was established in the mid-1780s, most of these boards and agencies were established in the last thirty years. They represent a relatively recent and unique development in the lives of colleges and universities. Coordination is probably best thought of as an experiment in governance; the coordinating boards are institutions with little precedent or parallel in either state government or in higher education. These boards were put place by approximately half the states in the hope of protecting a set of often cherished but often conflicting values - the autonomy of colleges and universities and their accountability to the public; the sensitivity of colleges and universities to market forces and their responsiveness to the public interest as articulated by the states; diversity, efficiency and quality.

GOVERNANCE BEYOND THE CAMPUS: THE AMERICAN CONTEXT

The issue of governance beyond or above the campus level and of types of institutions most likely to be effective in achieving the goals of institutions of higher education and of governments has not been nor is it likely to be resolved definitively by research or by practice. For most of the history of higher education in this country, the majority of states saw fit to do without any agency at all between the individual campus and the

state. Some academic leaders still regard this as the ideal condition.

Since the end of World War II, however, almost every state which had not previously done so has seen fit to superimpose some organization between the campuses and state government. The creation of these institutions paralleled the dramatic increases in enrollments and participation rates and the accommodation of the bulk of these increases in public, state-supported colleges and universities. These developments increased immeasurably the complexity of the public policy aspects of higher education, as well as the claims of colleges and universities on state financial support. The initial impetus for creation of the entities beyond the campus level was to bring order to the process of growth - an order that was jeopardized in the 1950s and 1960s by both academic and political forces in the states.

The political competition was for new campuses and the principal players were local communities and their elected representatives. The academic competition was for increased enrollments, new programs, and particularly for expanded missions as universities sought doctoral and professional programs, colleges sought university status, two-year colleges sought baccalaureate authority, etc. Most states lacked the capacity to sort out the competing claims, and it was clear that the purely political solutions might prove prohibitively costly while failing to meet the overall needs of the states for new enrollment capacity, programs and institutions. The voluntary

approaches to resolution of such issues, informal associations of institutional presidents which thrashed out issues of mutual concern, were unable to handle the pressures of competing aspirations. They tended to gridlock or to resort to logrolling as the only way to maintain consensus. By the late 1950s and the 1960s, confronted with the graduation from high school of the first cohorts of the baby boom generation, most states had to invent some institution to address the issues of expanded capacity.

The institutions created by the states can be divided into two generic categories. The first, the consolidated governing board, had precedent in a handful of rural states prior to World War II. In this model, all public four-year and sometimes two-year colleges and universities are placed under the control of a single board of regents or trustees, supported by a central staff. Individual campus governing boards are eliminated and campus chief executives report directly to the central board or to the board's executive officer. Authority to manage the institution is vested in the governing board by statute or by the state constitution.

The statewide coordinating board is the alternative model of governance beyond the campus. This model also had some historical precedent, but much less than the consolidated governing board. It leaves the governing boards and internal governance of individual institutions or multicampus systems intact. The board and agency is given jurisdiction over only

those matters believed necessary for statewide planning and for interinstitutional coordination. Authority over institutional management, including the selection of campus chief executives and internal budget allocation, is left to the governing boards.

Within each of the two generic models, there are numerous variations in the authority, scope of responsibilities and independence from state government. However, it is clear that the consolidated governing board is the more centralized of the two models in that it moves authority over internal management, including selection of the campus chief executive, away from the campus and eliminates the individual campus governing board. The model deals with academic and political competition by removing some of the campus-centered forces that cause competition and by making campus leadership accountable to boards with broader responsibilities and jurisdiction. It also creates a single solid administrative line from the state capital to all of public higher education. A single entity, the consolidated board is legally accountable for the entire enterprise.

The coordinating board, on the other hand, represents decentralization and reliance on checks and balances rather than on a single line of accountability. The functions of the board are specified in statute, and usually encompass responsibilities for some or all of the functions of statewide planning, budget review, program review and allocation, and policy analysis. All other authority remains where it was prior to the existence of the coordinating board - either with the state or with the

governing board of the institution. This is not to say that the enabling statutes which established coordinating boards are models of clarity and precision - only that the scope and functions of coordinating boards are limited in comparison with the consolidated governing boards and that the management of the institutions and multicampus systems are reserved to their governing boards in the states which created coordinating boards.

The preceding description has drawn sharp distinctions between state systems with consolidated governing boards and those with statewide coordinating boards, and the remainder of the essay focuses on issues relevant to coordinating boards. However, there are similarities as well as differences between the two models of statewide governance that should be noted. Most coordinating and consolidated governing boards were established in the same era and in response to the same pressures - largely those of growth and expansion. Both have broad responsibilities for the welfare of higher education. Both stand as intermediaries between colleges and universities and government. Both have embedded in their origins and their rationale the reality of conflict - conflict over values, resources, and priorities; conflict between government and institutions of higher education; conflict within state government; and conflict between institutions of higher education.

The welfare and effectiveness of colleges and universities has been the primary concern of both species of boards in most

states. However, the consolidated boards, like other governing boards of campuses and multicampus systems, tend to place highest priority on their responsibilities for articulating institutional needs and for advocacy of those needs. Coordinating boards, on the other hand, tend to define their roles as articulating the broad public interest in higher education, which may or may not be the same as the needs of the institution as the institution or its governing board see it at a particular point in time. Because in the coordinating board states the campus and system boards of trustees remain primarily responsible for advocacy, the coordinating boards have been less inclined to see advocacy as their primary responsibility, though they often advocate for the same things as institutions. The perspective of the coordinating board is generally that of the outsider looking in - sympathetic to the needs of higher education and cognizant of the crucial role of higher education in society, but critical and questioning and less likely to accept the operating assumption that what institutions define as good for themselves is what is best for society.

A final point on the distinction between consolidated governing boards and coordinating boards is an ironic one. The governing boards, even those that delegate substantial authority back to the campus, are by definition the greater centralizers. The powers of the consolidated board come from the campuses and their individual governing boards, which are abolished when consolidation occurs. Coordinating boards, on the other hand,

derive some of their more limited authority from the state while some authority comes at the expense of campuses. However, in most states the leaders of higher education institutions offered greater initial resistance to the establishment and operations of the coordinating boards. Tension and public acrimony between state and campus levels is thought to be more frequent within coordinated systems than in states with consolidated governing boards. The moral may be that some leaders of higher education institutions may dislike centralization, but they often dislike the more skeptical style of the coordinating boards even more. Or perhaps the trade-off of reduced campus autonomy for the more powerful advocacy of the consolidated board has been more palatable than the alternative of coordination. Of course, the most obvious difference is that disputes between campus and central authorities in consolidated systems are disputes between employees and employers, so the incentives, particularly for campus leaders, to avoid public conflict are greater.

One commonality of both consolidated governing boards and the statewide coordinating boards is their reliance upon the tradition of lay governance, one of the historically distinguishing characteristics of American higher education. It is conceivable that the states in their concern for rational planning and efficiency in the face of increased demand for higher education, might have bypassed this tradition in favor of government bureaus reporting directly to the executive branch of government. This did not happen. The other extreme, control of

some coordinating boards by higher educational officials representing institutions was proposed - a kind of continuation of the voluntary associations of presidents which had broken down under the pressures of growth - in a few states. The legislatures and governors generally insisted upon some representation of the general public by lay members with no institutional affiliations, even when they permitted institutional representation. The tendency in most states was to gradually eliminate the institutional representation, except when the institutions were represented on the coordinating board by members of their boards of trustees, as in California and Illinois. Even under these circumstances, public members typically came to comprise the majority on coordinating boards. With the development of the coordinating boards, a relatively new type of the public trustee emerged - a trustee who was not a member of a governing board of a particular institution or system but who took on responsibility for stewardship of the overall public interest in higher education in a state. The tradition of lay governance was maintained and enhanced. Another category of lay board was established to perform a new version of an old role in American higher education, that of the lay board as mediator and buffer between society and colleges and universities.

STATEWIDE COORDINATING BOARDS: MEMBERSHIP, STRUCTURES, FUNCTIONS

Through changes in board composition which ensured predominance of membership representing the general public and

the effective insulation of the coordinating boards from control of the institutions, the governors and legislators were delivering a message to the coordinating boards that their primary constituency was the "public interest," however defined. At the same time these changes were taking place in the 1960s and 1970s, the powers of many of the boards were frequently strengthened. Some boards which had been solely advisory to the institutions and state government were given greater powers to enforce recommendations regarding new campuses and centers, budgets, and new and existing academic programs; boards that already had such powers were sometimes given additional regulatory authority; and a few coordinating boards were abolished and replaced by consolidated governing boards. Seldom, if ever, were the powers of boards weakened despite the institutional and political opposition that their recommendations and decisions often aroused.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, while there were instances of restructuring of board membership and changes in board authority, the basic functions and policy tools used by coordinating boards remained the same. Statewide planning or "master planning" was the central function during the era of rapid growth. This meant assessing current and future needs of the states for new institutions and new programs, and defining the roles and missions, including level and scope of programs, of public institutions (and in a few states for private institutions as well). Ensuring diversity - a variety of types of

institutions to meet diverse educational needs - in an era when the aspirations of colleges and institutions have tended to be relatively homogeneous was a major consideration in most state plans and one of the major achievements of the coordinating boards in the sixties and seventies. Efficiency - particularly the avoidance of excessive duplication of high cost programs - was another important aspect of statewide planning.

During the times of real and projected expansion, planning tended to be the core function of coordinating boards. Recommendations regarding programs and levels of degrees followed logically from master plans, which might be revised at three-to-seven-year intervals. By the mid-1970s, planning had become less central to the activities of the coordinating boards. Some ceased to develop statewide plans; others placed less emphasis on them. Optimism about rational planning which had characterized the early and mid-1960s was dampened when some of the most careful planning was occasionally obliterated by the political "end runs" of politicians and institutions. Further, the techniques and theories of planning had been developed for a period of rapid growth, which was winding down. If planning in a different kind of era meant laying out negative scenarios in advance, it invited contentiousness by asking institutions to prepare for a future of curtailed aspirations rather than the deferral of aspirations which is sometimes necessary in a time of growth. There was also the unattractive possibility that plans for stable or reduced enrollments might be used as a rationale

for reduced appropriations for higher education, creating at least partially a self-fulfilling prophecy. It was also true that planning for stability, decline or retrenchment was not nearly as popular with governors and legislators as the old master plans for growth, so the pressures from the states for planning were not great. Finally, societal events which were not susceptible to forecasting (some had helped higher education, some had hurt it) - the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, fluctuations of the national economy, etc. often seemed to have greater influence on the course of events than the most carefully laid plans, leaving planners disillusioned.

Besides planning, the functions of program and budget review are the basic tools of statewide higher education coordination. The authority of the coordinating boards varied from consolidating institutional budget requests for submission to the states to selective budgetary commentary, to actually receiving the appropriation and allocating it to the institutions. With respect to academic programs, some coordinating boards have authority to approve new programs or direct the elimination of existing programs; others review and advise on new or existing programs. These functions of coordinating boards were viewed as the tools necessary to support and implement plans.

Policy analysis is the fourth major function common to most coordinating boards. This "catch-all" category covers the special studies of public policy issues in higher education initiated by the board or its staff or directed by the

legislative and executive branches. Here the board is expected to play the role of the state's impartial analyst, bringing ITS expertise in higher education to bear on issues of importance. In many states, this function more or less replaced the formal planning process as a method for identifying issues of importance and focusing the attention of institutional and state leaders on those issues. Unlike master plans, these types of studies do not have to be comprehensive or to take on a multitude of issues and special interests in a single project or document.

The four functions of planning, budget review, program review and policy analysis are only the most common responsibilities of coordinating boards. Many have also been assigned administrative responsibility for state and federal programs, including state student financial assistance programs, various programs that allocate money to institutions on competitive bases, etc. There is no consensus among practitioners and scholars as to whether such responsibilities enhance or detract from the role of these boards in coordinating higher education. Some argue that the accumulation of administrative functions provides stability, increases the stature and prestige of the board and its staff, and provides additional leverage for implementing core policies. Others assert that such responsibilities distract the board and staff from their policy roles and put them in a position of having programs and interests of their own to protect, reducing their credibility and impartiality.

While coordinating boards share some common functions and parallel histories from state to state, their operating styles have been shaped by political forces within each state and by their statutorily defined responsibilities and powers. The eastern and southern states have been more willing to grant de jure powers over program and budgets to the boards, while the western states have generally preferred to delegate less regulatory authority. Boards and agencies with strong planning authority but weak budget and program control have had to develop more proactive political strategies to gain support for implementation of their plans. In some states, accommodations and protocols between the coordinating board, its staff and the institutional leaders allow most disputes to be resolved through negotiation. In other states, the smallest disputes erupt into the public and legislative arena. Even where public brawling is rare, most coordinating boards and their staffs are often perceived by the colleges and universities as too political and bureaucratic in their approach and by governors and legislators as "soft" on academic institutions.

THE 1980s: NEW ISSUES, NEW ROLES

By the 1980s, the legislators and governors responsible for the creation of the statewide boards had, for the most part, passed from the state political scene. The founding executive officers of the boards and most of their immediate successors and the institutional presidents with whom they had frequently locked horns were no longer in place. For better or for worse, the

coordinating boards continued, often with augmented authority, except for a few which had been eliminated to make way for consolidated governing boards. There were few institutional leaders who could personally look back nostalgically to a time when the coordinating boards had not been a factor to be reckoned with; and it had become clear that most of the coordinating boards that were perceived as failures had been replaced with coordinating or governing boards with greater authority. The "third generation" of executive officers of coordinating boards were similarly free of the battle scars of the early years. It was clear that statewide boards in one form or another were a fixture in state higher education policy. Many institutional governing boards included in their definitions of successful presidents the ability to work effectively with (and sometimes around) state higher education boards in the same way presidents are expected to work with other agencies of government. Coordinating boards expected their executive officers to find ways to work with institutions and their leaders in ways that minimized unnecessary polarization. What emerged in many states was not a love feast but at least a new pragmatism.

While a handful of states were spared, the late 1970s and early 1980s were years of financial crisis for most states. The taxpayers revolt which began in California with the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 was followed by a barrage of tax cutting at the state and then at the federal level. The fiscal problems of the states were compounded by the recession of the early

eighties and the Reagan reductions of federal support to state and local government. Higher education often found itself badly squeezed. The professional and board leadership of many coordinating boards became alarmed that reduced levels of support for colleges and universities threatened the quality and accessibility of higher education. These boards moved to unprecedented advocacy, including support of tax increases in some states, and were often quite effective in calling attention to the plight of higher education. If they were unable to shield colleges and universities from the brunt of budget reductions, they were often instrumental in helping to secure a high priority for colleges and universities as the national economy and state revenues began to pick up.

In the meantime, the state political climates had changed. The reality of global economic competition had permeated the American consciousness. Economic development had become the job description of many governors, and education was seen as a key factor and one over which the states could exercise significant influence. A school reform movement was launched in almost every state, more often than not stimulated by an activist governor.

By the middle of the decade, some governors and state political leaders began to direct attention to higher education. A series of national reports emanating from within the academy had questioned the effectiveness of the undergraduate curriculum in the early eighties. Some of these concerns were picked up by a task force of the National Governors' Association which called

upon the states to clearly define institutional missions, emphasize the importance of undergraduate education, see that colleges and universities established systematic approaches to assessment of student learning, and provide incentives for the improvement of quality. The task force also emphasized the importance of equality of educational opportunity. (National Governors' Association, 1986, 153-165)

Some of the elements of this agenda had already been put into place as initiatives of several coordinating boards, and by the latter part of the 1980s most coordinating boards had adopted some initiatives to improve undergraduate education. Most frequently these initiatives included mandating or encouraging assessment of undergraduate education outcomes. A number of approaches to incentive funding were also proposed and some were implemented.

The coordinating boards and the national organization of the executive officers of state coordinating and governing boards have played a major role in the efforts to place the issue of participation of underrepresented ethnic minorities high on the list of institutional and state priorities. The eighties were a decade in which progress in achieving equal opportunity for these groups in higher education virtually ceased. Many of the coordinating boards, like their institutional counterparts in higher education as well as state and federal government, had let equity concerns slide from their agendas. But by the end of the decade, in many states the coordinating boards and their leaders

were leading efforts, along with several governors and some institutional presidents, to stimulate more effective and sustained institutional responses to the issues of minority enrollment and achievement.

In a few states the traditional coordinating board policy tools of statewide planning, program review and budget review were used to advance and implement the quality and equity initiatives. More often these initiatives took place outside the traditional framework. This, after all, was the era of Reaganism and deregulation. And the eighties turned out to be a decade in which higher education did rather well; financial support of all types of institution grew at a rate considerably above enrollment growth (which was insignificant nationally) and inflation. There were adequate resources to improve base support of institutions and to support many of the initiatives of governors and coordinating boards.

As the decade ended, the majority of states were facing the prospect of a severe economic downturn. It remained to be seen whether the add-on initiatives for quality and equity, many of them funded centrally through the state coordinating boards, could survive lean years when the base budgets of institutions were imperiled. The jury is still out on whether the assessment initiatives of the states have resulted in increased attention and improved effectiveness of undergraduate education. The urgency of the equity agenda was widely recognized by state policy leaders, but the likelihood of massive infusions of new

dollars from the federal government or the states seems slim. The incentive approach to institutional change which had been favored by many of the coordinating boards appears jeopardized by the deterioration of state finances and by the declining interest of state political leaders, predictable in hard times, in providing incentives for things they believed were the basic responsibilities of colleges and universities - educating undergraduates, enrolling and graduating minority students, etc.

While there is in many states little love lost between institutional leaders and coordinating boards, there was probably more negotiation and collaboration and less public acrimony in the eighties than in the two previous decades. Improved relationships, where they have developed, are often said to represent the maturation of the systems of governance that were put into place in the sixties and the seventies and greater investment by all parties in reaching agreement on substantive issues rather than battling over turf. However, a more skeptical interpretation might suggest that the coordinating boards had been able to have it both ways in a decade in which healthy state revenues and generous appropriations had permitted support of institutional priorities as well as of the statewide initiatives proposed by the boards. For those states and institutions which were not fortunate to enjoy the revenue and appropriations growth of the 1980s, the more skeptical interpretation would suggest that the decade was largely a holding action.

THE 1990s

Clark Kerr recently asserted that the eighties were similar to the to the decades between 1900-1910 and 1920-1930, which were characterized by stability in the American higher education enterprise. Kerr's analysis of enrollments, faculties, and financial support led him to conclude that the eighties were a static decade for higher education nationally. Not much changed. "Few important decisions were made because few important decisions needed to be made." Leaders, including presidents, trustees, faculty senates, coordinating boards, and governors, according to Kerr, made less of a difference. The eighties were a decade of "normalcy," and American higher education was not much different at the end of the decade than at the beginning. "Decision makers," according to Kerr, "had a mostly free ride" (Kerr, 1990, 6).

Whether one agrees or disagrees with Kerr's assessment of the eighties, there are already reasons to believe that the nineties will be different. For the states, early signs are that the nineties will be a time when more will be asked from higher education but less will be given. For the coordinating boards, the style of leadership required for the nineties will again shift, just as it has shifted in previous decades, in response to the issues and the times.

The first challenge for the coordinating boards will be to both influence and respond to state public policy agendas. While

the issues that will shape the decade cannot be precisely predicted, the context is a bit more clear. The fiscal difficulties of states were discussed earlier in this essay. These will be compounded if there is a lengthy recession, which would reduce state revenues while increasing demands for other public services. If the federal government should, as seems likely, continue to pass costs of social programs to states, the resulting pressure on state budgets will have indirect ramifications for higher education appropriations. The state financial crunch will hit some states at a time when higher education enrollments are projected to decline sharply in the early nineties; other states will confront financial difficulties when they are experiencing or projecting enrollment growth. In either case, the financial and demographic projections suggest difficult times ahead.

While difficult to document precisely, the impatience of many state leaders with colleges and universities has been growing in recent years. In the summer of 1990, the National Governors' Association released a report on state strategies to achieve the national education goals. While most of the report focuses on public schools, there are recommendations urging the governors to adopt aggressive policies to stimulate and hold colleges and universities accountable for reform of teacher education, improvement of enrollment and graduation rates of underrepresented ethnic minority groups, and improvement of teaching and learning (National Governors' Association, 1990).

The impression that colleges and universities have been aloof from the school reform movement and reluctant to make fundamental changes needed to support school reform was confirmed by the release of John Goodlad's major study of teacher education in the fall of 1990. This report documented the low priority and the neglect of teacher education by colleges and universities (Goodlad, 1990). Another national report, Scholarship Reconsidered by Ernest L. Boyer, asserted that the definition of scholarship in colleges and universities has become too narrow. Boyer recommended that an expanded definition would encourage and reward faculty for the scholarship of integration, application, and teaching as well as for discovery of knowledge. (Boyer, 1990).

What emerges from these and other reports and from the public utterances of some governors is not a sense that higher education is less valued than in the past, but the prospect of a mismatch between the needs of society and the directions and aspirations of colleges and universities, particularly four-year institutions which grant baccalaureate degrees and above. The perspective held by many governors and legislatures seems to be that the energies of colleges and universities are focused inwardly, captured by a self-serving value system which places less and less importance on the needs of society or students; that the research ethos is dominant even in public institutions which have teaching as their stated primary mission; and that aggressive public policies will be needed to direct the attention

of colleges and universities to teaching their students and attending to such functions as teacher education and extending the benefits of higher education to minority groups.

In the Spring of 1990 the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association and the Education Commission of the States surveyed the executive officers of statewide coordinating boards and consolidated governing boards regarding their views of the major issues confronting higher education in their states. The report of the survey does not distinguish between the responses of governing and coordinating board executives. Yet as the summary of the survey points out, all those surveyed are "key participants . . . linking state policy makers to institutional leaders in setting the state policies and providing the resources necessary to meet public needs." While the survey did not attempt to predict future issues, the results do provide useful insights on the public policy agenda as seen by these state leaders a few months into the new decade. The issues which were identified in order of the frequency with which they were cited were: improving undergraduate education; increasing minority student achievement; addressing concerns over accountability and effectiveness; support for research and economic development; review of institutional roles and missions; need for new faculty and competitive salaries; reforming teacher education programs; linking levels of education; adequacy of physical facilities; tuition and student costs. Issues mentioned less frequently included student financial aid, regulation of for-profit

education, and development of educational telecommunications systems (Lenth, 1990, ix-xi).

There is already ferment around the higher education agenda of the states and of the coordinating boards in the new decade. Some of the issues of importance will be raised outside higher education, stimulated by societal changes and national and international events. Others will be the issues that government and institutions choose to make important. The setting of the agenda is probably the most important aspect of public policy and it is the place where thinking about the new decade should begin. The coordinating boards are in a unique and pivotal position. Regardless of their formal authority or history, they are the only entities in their states which can develop a public policy agenda for all of higher education - public and private, two-year and four-year, academic and vocational - from a nonpartisan perspective. They represent the principle in state higher education policy that the overall long-term welfare of higher education in the state should, amid all the short-term pressures political conflicts, be a litmus test applied to important policy and budgetary decisions. With respect to the political arms of state government and the institutions of higher education, coordinating boards can play the role of the leader who, to paraphrase John Gardner, is neither unfriendly critic nor uncritical lover. However, if these entities are to lead in the new decade, they must first see that their own houses are in order.

LOOKING INWARD

The capacity to provide leadership in the public interest begins with the composition of the board itself. The members must be sympathetic listeners to all who have a stake in policy outcomes but ultimately independent in their decisions. Each board must work with its executive officer to develop a coherent point of view about policy directions for higher education. Such a perspective may evolve through the development of statewide plans, special studies and positions taken on programmatic and budgetary issues. Without a consistent overall policy framework, a board risks danger of becoming another just actor in the political and bureaucratic world, driven primarily by administrative concerns and short-term political pressures.

It is in its conception of its role that the issue of leadership is joined. Boards can interpret their roles narrowly as primarily administrative or analytic ("We review budgets and oversee approval of new programs," or "We approve reports and policy recommendations.") or as subservient to the wishes of institutional or political interests. What has been most important in separating the effective from the ineffective coordinating boards over the past three decades has not been formal authority. Some of the most statutorily powerful boards have been the least influential; some of those with least authority have wielded the greatest influence. The critical variable is whether the board and its staff interpret their role

as one of independent statewide leadership and whether they fuse whatever functions and powers they have been granted into an overall strategy of leadership. Without such a strategy, the board's role becomes trivialized and the complaints of some institutional leaders that the boards represent an unnecessary layer of politics and bureaucracy are justified.

Next to the the board itself, the critical element is the executive officer. The person selected for this position must be capable of providing intellectual and policy leadership for higher education in the state and must have credibility with educators and with the political and administrative leaders of state government. He or she must be willing and able to respect diverse points of view and be comfortable in a world of conflict and disagreement, must have the skills necessary to build consensus where principled consensus is possible and the willingness to take prudent and principled risks rather than capitulate to purely political pressures. Operating in the political arena without a real constituency is both an advantage and a disadvantage. The executive officer and the board have the opportunity to develop policy positions based on educational and social values and principles and careful analysis without the need to be bound by particular constituencies. The liabilities are that this freedom can breed arrogance and its responsible exercise can create great political vulnerability. It is at the points of vulnerability where philosophical and policy agreement between the board and its chief executive is critical. This is

also the point where the board's commitment to support strong leadership and risk-taking is most likely to be tested.

In some states, the executive officers of coordinating boards have been chosen in ways that compromise the boards' long-term credibility. Political pressures have been brought to bear on the appointment or dismissal processes. Or boards have made appointments of executive officers without open searches. These appointments solve the short-term problem - filling the position with minimal effort or in ways that satisfy the wishes of powerful individuals or constituencies - at the expense of long term credibility. After all, one rationale for the existence of the board is to insulate the work of the coordinating agency from just these kinds of pressures. Even when capable people are appointed through suspect processes, their credibility is compromised from the start - along with the credibility of the appointing board.

Boards have a special responsibility to the states and to the higher education community to assure the competence of their executive officers and staffs. This means they must be able to hire in an increasingly competitive marketplace. Salaries and benefits should permit the coordinating boards to compete with colleges and universities and with government for the best talent. The poor academic job market of the past two decades resulted in a windfall for some coordinating agencies, which were able to hire staff who would not have considered employment outside academia if more choices had been available. Many

coordinating boards improved the quality of their staffs significantly during this period. The marketplace of the nineties will be different. A seller's rather than a buyer's market for academic talent is predicted. Coordinating boards and their executive officers should pay careful attention to salary and benefits structures during this decade. An erosion of staff quality can be avoided if the competitiveness issue receives attention early on.

AFTERWORD

The future of coordinating boards is not in itself a terribly important question. After all, these boards do not educate students, conduct basic research or provide university-based public service. The boards are means to larger ends - public policy that supports the accessibility and quality of higher education. Most of the coordinating boards are too young to permit definitive conclusions as to whether they are the best social-political institutions which might ultimately be invented to serve the purpose of statewide policy leadership. Despite the fact that most of these entities have survived for two or three decades, they are fragile institutions. Their existence is testimony to the desire of some states to have it both ways - to protect both institutional autonomy and purposeful development of state higher education systems, to maintain institutional and system identity and initiative while preserving the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and to provide a vehicle for the articulation of broad statewide

interests while insulating colleges and universities from the exigencies of partisan politics. The systems of coordination and the boards responsible for them are charged with maintaining these forces and values in a healthy tension rather than promoting the domination of one set of interests over the others. The underlying assumption is that the price that is paid in tension and in conflict produces a better and more responsive system of higher education than the alternatives of centralized bureaucracy, laissez faire or partisan political control. The circumstances of the next decade will once again test this assumption and will certainly test the leadership of statewide coordinating boards.

Table 1

AUTHORITY OF STATE BOARDS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
1990

Consolidated Governing Board		Coordinating Boards						Planning Agencies
		With Program Approval Authority			With Program Review and Recommendation Authority Only			
Board for All Public Institutions	Board for All Senior Institutions. Separate Agency for Community Colleges	Consolidated or Aggregated Budget (d)	Budget Review and Recommendation (f)	No Statutory Budget Role	Consolidated or Aggregated Budget (d)	Budget Review and Recommendation	No Statutory Budget Role or Program Approval	
Alaska Georgia Hawaii Idaho (a) Maine (c) Massachusetts Montana (a) Nevada North Dakota Rhode Island South Dakota Utah Puerto Rico	Arizona Florida (a) Iowa Kansas Mississippi New Hampshire (b) North Carolina Oregon Wyoming Wisconsin (c)	Alabama Arkansas Connecticut Illinois Maryland New Jersey Ohio Oklahoma South Carolina	Colorado (f) Indiana Kentucky Louisiana Missouri Pennsylvania (a) Tennessee Texas (f) Virginia Washington	New York (a)	Florida (a,b)	Alaska (b) California Minnesota New Mexico (g) Oregon (b)	New Hampshire (b)	Delaware Michigan (a) Nebraska Vermont District of Columbia West Virginia (h)

Notes:
a) States with agency responsible for all levels of education.
b) Separate statutory coordinating agency.
c) Maine Maritime Academy and Vocational-Technical Institutes are under other boards.
d) Separate institutional budgets may be included in consolidated or aggregated budgets.
e) State Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education is separate from Board of Regents.
f) Boards develop the formula on the basis of which allocations are made to institutions.
g) Statutory authority related to programs provides only for approval of new graduate programs.
h) West Virginia Secretary of Education and the Arts has authority to coordinate rule-making by the state's two multi-campus boards.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 2

PATTERNS OF CAMPUS GOVERNANCE

Consolidated Governing Boards		Coordinating Boards						Planning Agencies (i)		
		Regulatory Coordinating Boards (f) Patterns of Campus Governance			Advisory Coordinating Boards (g) Patterns of Campus Governance			Patterns of Campus Governance		
Board for All Public Institutions	Board for All Senior Institutions. Separate Agency for Community Colleges	Multi-campus or Segmental Systems	Mixed Single Institutional Boards and Multi-campus or Segmental System	Primarily Single Institutional Boards	Multi-campus or Segmental Systems	Mixed Single Institutional Boards and Multi-campus or Segmental System	Primarily Single Institutional Boards	Multi-campus or Segmental Systems	Mixed Single Institutions I Boards and Multi-campus or Segmental System	Primarily Single Institutional Boards
Alaska (b) Georgia Hawaii Idaho (a) Maine Mass. (D) Montana (a) Nevada North Dakota Rhode Island South Dakota Utah(D) Puerto Rico	Arizona Florida (a,b) Iowa Kansas Mississippi New Hampshire (b) North Carolina (D) Oregon (b) Wisconsin (a) Wyoming	Connecticut Florida (a) Illinois	Alabama Arkansas Colorado (d) Maryland New Jersey Oklahoma S. Carolina Texas	Ohio (I)	Alaska (b) California Louisiana Minnesota New York (h,A) Oregon (b,a) Tennessee	Indiana Missouri New Mexico Pennsylvania	Kentucky (I) Virginia (I) Washington (I)	District of Columbia Nebraska West Virginia (j)	Delaware Vermont	Michigan

Notes:
(a) States with agency responsible for all education levels.
(b) Alaska, Florida, Oregon and New Hampshire have coordinating agencies in addition to a consolidated governing board.
(c) Maine Maritime Academy and vocational-technical institutions are under separate boards.
(d) Colorado Commission recommends to legislature the relative proportions to be appropriated to each institution.
(e) Office of Educational Policy & Planning is in governor's office and is not a separate boards.
(f) Regulatory boards produce a consolidated budget for all institutions or an aggregated budget.
(g) Advisory boards review and make recommendations to the governor and legislature on separate institutional budgets.
(h) New York Board of Regents does not have budget authority.
(i) Planning agencies have neither program nor budget authority.
(j) West Virginia Secretary of Education and the Arts has authority to coordinate rule making by the state's two multi-campus boards.

Institutional Boards:
(I) Each public institution has an independent, autonomous board.
(A) Each institution under the jurisdiction of the multi-campus system has a board with limited advisory authority.
(D) Each institution under the jurisdiction of the multi-campus system has a board with authority delegated by the system board.

REFERENCES

Boyer, Ernest L. Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities for the Professoriate. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Goodlad, John I. Teachers for Our Nation's Schools. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990.

Kerr, Clark. "Higher Education Cannot Escape History: The 1990s." New Directions in Higher Education 70 (Summer, 1990): 5-17.

Lenth, Charles S. State Priorities in Higher Education, 1990. Denver: SHEEO and ECS, 1990.

National Governors' Association, 1986. Time for Results, The Governors' 1991 Report on Education. Washington, D.C.: Author.

National Governors' Association, 1990. Educating America: State Strategies for Achieving the National Education Goals. Washington, D.C.: Author.

PATRICK M. CALLAN

Patrick M. Callan is senior consultant to the Education Commission of the States in Denver. He has served as staff director of the California legislature's Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Higher Education, director of the Montana Commission on Postsecondary Education, executive director of the Washington State Council for Postsecondary Education, executive director of the California Commission on Postsecondary Education, and vice president of the Education Commission of the States. He has written extensively on education and public policy.